

Things You Need To Know



National park rangers enforce a wide spectrum of federal laws and regulations and a variety of state statutes. Familiarize yourself with park rules.

GENERAL REGULATIONS

- **Do not destroy or collect natural or cultural resources in the park.** For example, do not collect, damage, or destroy any plants, animals, rocks, artifacts, historic objects, flowers, or pine cones. You may harvest up to one gallon of berries for personal consumption.
- **Do not harass wildlife!** Observe wildlife quietly from a distance. Animals need adequate space to feed, nest, and raise young. Do not disturb wildlife, especially breeding or nesting birds, or adult animals with young.
- **Store food properly.** Voyageurs is bear country. See page 4 for detailed information about how to store your food, garbage, pet food and scented items.
- **DO NOT drink and drive.** Operating an automobile, boat or snowmobile while under the influence of alcohol or drugs is prohibited.
- **Respect Public Use Closures.** Check at visitor centers and boat ramp bulletin boards for areas that have been closed to protect park visitors, park wildlife, and other sensitive resources. Closed areas are posted with signs.
- **Protect Water Quality.** Use comfort stations where facilities are available. Otherwise dispose of human waste by digging a hole at least six inches deep, and at least 100 feet away from shoreline.
- **Keep Voyageurs National Park beautiful.** Do not litter. Do not leave trash in the park. If you pack something in, please pack it out. Do not burn garbage at campsites.
- **Keep the Shade!** Cutting live or dead standing trees is prohibited. Collect only dead AND downed wood.
- **Hunting is not allowed in Voyageurs National Park.**
- **Firearms, archery equipment, and fireworks are prohibited.**
- **Chainsaws are prohibited** except when being used to cut ice fishing holes.
- **Private floatplanes may be prohibited on the park's interior lakes** in 2007 to prevent the spread of the spiny waterflea, an aquatic exotic invasive species. This includes Locator, War Club, Quill, Loiten, Shoepack, Mukooda, and Little Trout Lakes. Contact park staff for current information.
- **Private floatplanes are allowed** on Rainy Lake, Kabetogama Lake, Sand Point Lake, and Namakan Lake.
- **A Minnesota fishing license is required** to fish in the park. If you plan to fish in the park get a copy of the Minnesota fishing regulations at area businesses or visitor centers. Know the slot limit (size limit) for the lakes where you will be fishing. Park rangers enforce Minnesota state fishing regulations.
- **Know Canadian fishing and customs regulations** before you cross the border. (807) 274-3655
- **Swimming, diving, and bathing are prohibited at docks** in developed areas (visitor centers & Kettle Falls). Diving from other park docks is discouraged.
- **Water skiing is prohibited in navigation channels.**
- **Be Fire Safe!** Extinguish all campfires when unattended. Make sure the fire is out and the ashes are cold before leaving.
- **Quiet Time** – Parkwide 10:00 pm to 6:00 am
- **Pets are not allowed on park trails or in the backcountry.** This rule is in place to protect park wildlife, and to protect your pet.
- **Pets must be leashed and attended at all times.** Pets are allowed in developed areas (around visitor centers, boat ramps, picnic areas, campsites and houseboat sites on the four main lakes, and along park entrance roads.
- **Firewood Restrictions** are being considered to protect forest health and prevent the spread of invasive pests like the emerald ash borer. Stop by a park visitor center for current information.
- **The large lakes in the park have been identified as infested waters due to the presence of the spiny waterflea.** This designation requires that special precautions be taken when moving between different bodies of water, particularly when leaving infested waters and moving to uninfested waters. Stop by a park visitor center for more detailed information, or visit the park's website at <http://www.nps.gov/voya>

Navigation You Need to Know

The U.S. Coast Guard Buoy System: The Coast Guard numbered red and green buoy system is used to guide boaters and mark hazards (see below). To use this system you need to know the direction of lake flow. Namakan, Sand Point and Crane lakes all flow north or downlake toward Kettle Falls. Kabetogama Lake flows east or downlake to Namakan and Kettle Falls. Rainy Lake flows west or downlake to International Falls. Remember red buoys to your right while traveling uplake (red right return).

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Can buoys are green with odd numbers. Keep them to the left when going uplake.
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Nun buoys are red with even numbers. Keep them to the right when going uplake.
- Diamond shape warns of danger. Cross in diamond means boats must keep out.
- Circled mark means a controlled area. It may carry a speed limit, for example.
- Divers flag warns of the presence of divers, who may be just under the surface.



INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT

Invasive species are plants, animals or diseases that are not native to the local ecosystem and that are likely to cause harm to the economy, to the environment, or to human health. The park's forests, lakes and native plant communities are at risk from several species of aquatic exotics, invasive plants, and forest pests. Four species that you should be aware of are:

- **Spiny waterflea** – This tiny (1/4-5/8”) crustacean zooplankton is native to Eurasia and was introduced into the Great Lakes from the ballast water of ships. They threaten the park's aquatic ecosystems and fishing by competing with native fish for food and by fouling fishing gear. Spiny waterfleas are spread when either live adult waterfleas or viable resting eggs are transferred to a new body of water. Spiny waterfleas can be transported on bait buckets, anchor ropes, fishing line, boats, waders, and nets. Spiny waterfleas were found in Rainy Lake and Namakan Lake in 2006. The large lakes in the park have been declared infested waters. This designation requires that specific actions be taken to prevent the unintended spread of this species to uninfested waters. See the best management practices described below, or stop by a park visitor center for more information.
- **Rusty Crayfish** – Rusty crayfish were discovered in the park in 2006. Rusty crayfish are more aggressive than native crayfish and can disrupt aquatic plant and animal communities by eliminating aquatic plants in infested areas. Help slow the spread of aquatic exotics described below. Never release any pet or aquarium species of crayfish into lakes, and remember that using live crayfish for bait is prohibited in park waters.
- **Emerald Ash Borer** – The emerald ash borer has decimated ash trees in Michigan and is spreading westward, currently to the Chicago area. These insects, and other forest pests, can be transported to the park in contaminated firewood. Please do not bring firewood from outside of the local area. Purchase near the park or collect dead & downed wood near your campsite.
- **Eurasian Watermilfoil** – This invasive aquatic plant is moving northward in Minnesota and may reach park waters soon. This plant has been found to interfere with boating, fishing, and swimming and can also crowd out native water plants.

Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!

- 1) Inspect your boat, trailer, and equipment and remove visible aquatic plants, animals and mud before leaving the water access.
- 2) Drain water from your boat, motor, bilge, live wells, and bait containers before leaving the water access.
- 3) Dispose of unwanted bait and other aquatic plants and animals in the trash.
- 4) Spray or rinse with water at least 140 degrees F, or dry boats and equipment for five days to remove or kill species that were not visible before moving from infested to uninfested waters.



SAFETY

Boating Safety Tips

- Always wear your life jacket – three lives have been lost over the past five years without one.
- Minnesota state law requires all watercraft (including canoes and kayaks) to have one wearable U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (PFD) on board and accessible for each person in the watercraft.
- Minnesota State rules require that all children less than 10 years of age must wear a life preserver when in a recreational boat.
- All passengers should stay seated or within the boat while the boat is moving. Riding on the bow or gunwale is prohibited!
- Know where you can re-fuel your boat.
- Don't drink & drive. County Sheriff, US Coast Guard staff, and Park Rangers enforce laws prohibiting boat operations under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Safe Boating Checklist

- ☐ Don't leave it to chance, plan on having a safe and enjoyable experience by making sure you have these items whenever boating in the park:
- ☐ A wearable life preserver readily accessible for each person
- ☐ Type IV throwable cushion or ring
- ☐ Navigational maps
- ☐ Navigation lights at night – use them!
- ☐ Whistle or horn
- ☐ Anchor, paddles or oars, and lines
- ☐ Spare propeller and shear pin
- ☐ Flashlight and first aid kit

Watch the Weather


The weather can change rapidly and severely at any time of the year — seek protection behind islands and within safe harbors during thunderstorms.

Avoid prolonged exposure to wind and cold as conditions for hypothermia are present year round.

Wildlife

Observe wildlife from a distance. The animals in the park are wild and their behavior may be unpredictable.

Do not feed wildlife. Store food, garbage and other scented items appropriately to avoid attracting animals to your picnic or campsite (see page 4).



Water Quality

Always treat lake water before using it for drinking or cooking. Consider bringing drinking water with you when camping in the park. Otherwise, use a high-quality water filter to remove potential contaminants.

A few words of caution about blue-green algae...

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) advises the public to approach lake areas with blue-green algae blooms with caution. During the right conditions these blooms can be toxic to pets and harmful to people. A blue-green algae bloom that looks like pea soup should be avoided. For detailed information visit the MPCA website at www.pca.state.mn.us/water/clmp-toxicalgae.html



